

Dad by OTTSTF

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Summary:

It's a simple title, really. But to some, it can mean the world.

Dad

Author's Note:

This was going to release about ten hours ago.
I kinda got interrupted by a thing called work.
Darnet.

“Bye, kids!” the chief of police calls as he leaves the cabin for the day.

“Bye, Hop!”

“Bye, chief!” El and Mike call in unison, already set to begin watching whatever shows the TV presents them with. They both look in the man’s direction, waving him off as he grabs his hat, giving them a small smile before he backs through the door.

Mike notices, for the first time ever, something reminiscent of disappointment on the Chief’s face. It’s small; insignificant if anything, but still there. Mike wonders what it could be for. It’s not something they’re doing, as the Chief has told Mike many times that, although he’s starting to nearly live with them, he doesn’t mind him staying with El. In his own words, he’s a good kid, he’s well behaved, he’s good company for El, and most importantly, he’s hell-bent on keeping her safe, just as the man himself is.

So if it’s not that, what could it be?

Mike reflects on the moment his face changed: as soon as they’d called their byes for the day.

Does he want Mike to call him something else? He’s been telling Mike that he’s okay with him using the ‘Hop’ name too, although he doesn’t think *that* would cause such a reaction.

Hop. That’s what El calls him.

Perhaps he’s hoping for something else? He’s her father now, after all. Maybe he’s hoping that one day she might call him that?

“El?” he decides he’s going to bring this up with her.

“Yes, Mike?”

“Have you ever thought about, uhm... well, calling Hop ‘Dad’ or something?” he hopes he’s not bringing this up too sudden; he doesn’t want to seem demanding about it.

“I’ve... thought about it, yes.” she answers, clearly not thrown off by the question, much to Mike’s relief. “Why?”

“Well, I just...” he wonders how to say this without making her feel guilty.

“I saw Hopper look kind of... I dunno, sad? Just a little, nothing to really worry about, but... I guess I have a feeling that he’s hoping, one day, you might call him that, or something.”

“I... wanted to.” she says, beginning to have a look of sorrow in her own eyes. “But I didn’t want to...” she clearly searches for the terminology.

“Push... boundaries.”

“Push boundaries?” He questions. “Why would you be pushing boundaries?”

“He’s... I’m not his real daughter.” she admits her reasoning in a hushed tone, as if ashamed by it.

“El, that doesn’t matter.” he tells her quickly, hopefully reassuringly.

“He loves you like his own. Whether you’re actually related or not doesn’t matter at all.”

“But won’t he think I’m... trying to replace...” she sighs as she thinks of the late daughter of Hopper. “Sara?”

Mike sighs too, regretting the story about said girl. “I don’t think so.”

“I’m sure, if he thought that, he wouldn’t have taken you in to begin with. He definitely wouldn’t have been so happy to get your birth certificate.”

El considers these points, and supposes they make sense. Perfect sense, in fact. Hopper was very happy to get a birth certificate for her, which makes him her real father.

“So, you think I should call him Dad?”

Mike nods, with a smile.

“I think, just to see the look on his face, when he gets home, you should run up to him and jump into a hug. Say “I missed you, Dad.” or something like that. He’d love it, I know it.”

El imagines it, and smiles. She remembers the first time she’d heated dinner for the man to arrive home to, and the smile that had put on his face. After everything he’s done for her, she would like to see that happiness again. She nods her head enthusiastically, happy with the plan.

And so, later that evening, when they hear their designated knock pattern, El rises to her feet, unlocks the door, and leaps into the man’s arms in record time.

“Woah!” he huffs in a laugh as he catches her. “What’s this about?”

“I missed you.” El tells him, before placing a kiss onto the man’s cheek.

“Welcome home, dad.”

And with that, she runs back over to the table, where she was sat with Mike, with three plates of food between them. Looking back to the man, she’s beyond happy to see him stunned at her sudden change of greeting.

Snapping out of his daze, he looks over to the table, glancing between her, with her head facing away from him, towards Mike, whilst the boy is glancing between her and the chief, with a knowing smirk on his face.

Closing the door, he figures he’s got some thanking to do before the Wheeler kid leaves.

Author's Note:

Tiny? Yeah but what fics of mine aren't lmao.

Hopeless? Yep.

Feed me with your words, you beautiful people. ♥